

Hello committee chairs, and members. My name is Katrina Ray-Saulis and I live in Augusta. I am an adjunct instructor, a member of MSEA-SEIU Local 1989, and the union chapter president for the adjuncts of the Maine Community College System. I'm testifying on my own time on LD258.

I know that I share many of my colleagues' feelings when I say that we are concerned about where the funding for the free community college program will be spent. We have seen some amazing students come through our classrooms because of this program, and we want them to keep on coming, but it can not be ignored that their education is being carried on the backs of underpaid, overworked adjuncts. It also can not be ignored that the majority of adjuncts are women.

I am a product of Maine's community colleges. I have spoken here before about how my education at CMCC helped pull me out of generational poverty and recurring homelessness. I cherish this program and these schools. It is because of that experience that I am deeply concerned about the fact that in an educational institution the majority of the educators are also the lowest paid people on campus.

Adjuncts have the same professional level qualifications as full-time faculty members, and in a lot of cases we also have the same workload. We have adjunct faculty members in MCCS with ivy league degrees, PhDs, piles of publications, and decades of teaching experience. We have adjuncts who have taught every single semester for decades, and yet are not considered permanent employees. On top of that our adjuncts have the same drive and passion to serve our student population as full-time faculty do. As one of my colleagues says frequently, we deserve equal pay for that equal work.

I have watched over and over as full-time faculty retire, and are replaced by adjunct faculty. On the rare occasion when a full-time position has opened up, that position is usually filled by people from outside of the college. Not one adjunct has been promoted in my department in my 5 years teaching, despite the fact that we all have proved semester upon semester that we are qualified for the job. This is the trend across all seven campuses where the last estimate I saw was anywhere between 60 and 75% of courses are currently being taught by adjuncts depending on the department. I don't have the exact numbers on that but Representative Dodge, if you get that data I'd love to circle back. I can confirm that an adjunct like myself, who teaches four 3 credit courses a semester, which is the minimum full-time faculty are required to teach, earns less than \$24,000 a year, and they earn more than twice what we earn.

One adjunct recently told me, "I imagine myself as a volunteer, and I treat this like any other volunteer opportunity, because when I factor in the hours I spend teaching, the wages are so low per hour that if I don't treat it as volunteer work I feel badly about myself."

Adjuncts are teaching in these positions without healthcare options, paid time off, sick pay, or guaranteed employment. The title of adjunct, once used for temporary employees just helping out here and there, is now largely the only position available to us. On top of that we work two, three, and in the case of one adjunct I spoke with last week, four other jobs to supplement our income. If we want to attract instructors to these schools the only way to do that is to offer actual careers, and stop relying so heavily on adjuncts.

It is essential that funding be used to add full-time faculty positions at MCCS, and that the majority of those positions go to those of us who are already doing that work. On top of that, this committee needs to guarantee this funding is used to increase adjunct pay, as all adjuncts deserve professional level pay

for doing professional level work. We are doing the same work as full-time permanent faculty, and we deserve the same wages and respect.

Thank you.